



# *Scouting for Project Funding?*

## **Grant Writing Tips**

Most grant programs are competitive. Applications are compared and ranked. It is not always the best projects that get funded. Rather, it is the projects that clearly meet the program's mission and objectives that are ranked highest. These tips will help you prepare competitive applications for Montana's Department of Natural Resources and Conservation's various grant programs.

**Vigilantly abide by application instructions.** Failure to follow instructions will cause reviewers to question your ability to properly manage grant funding. Call and ask questions if an instruction is unclear.

**Format and write the application to meet review criteria.** Reviewers typically use some kind of ranking criteria when evaluating an application for funding. Understand what reviewers will value most and put your greatest effort toward addressing those criteria in your application.

**Be clear about your project purpose, goals & deliverables.** Describe the natural resource issue or concern clearly, provide evidence that it really exists, and describe how your project will address it. Deliverables should be specific, realistic, and measurable if possible.

**Address objectives in your schedule & budget.** Provide a timeline of activities. Research budgeted costs. Be clear and realistic with your schedule and budget. Reviewers will notice wild guesses.

**Connect the project to the past and the future.** Tie your project to existing plans or past successes. These will increase reviewers' confidence in your ability to deliver results. Show how the project or the benefits of the project will continue after the grant money runs out.

**Connect the project to the community.** Most grants come from public funds. Include letters of support from as many stakeholder groups and individuals as possible. State how the project fits into community goals and plans or how it will serve the public.

**Provide graphics to clarify.** Maps, graphs, tables, and pictures are often more intuitive, succinct, and effective ways to communicate certain information.

**Polish the final product before submission.** Have someone check your spelling, grammar, and clarity of statements before submitting the application. The quality of the application is an indicator of the ability of the applicant to manage a grant.

**Learn from previous applications.** You can often find information about a grant program's previously funded projects. Research these funded project applications to learn what made them successful. If your application is not funded, ask someone from the grant program how your project could be better presented the next time you submit an application or what other grant program might be a better fit.